

# CountyCitizen

Summer 2003

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MIAMI-DADE

## South Florida Agencies Unite For Full-Scale Disaster Drill

Office of Emergency  
Management Announces New  
Hurricane Evacuation Zones

Latest Metrorail Station Opens

County Employees Build Habitat  
for Humanity Homes

Children's Summer Activities...  
So Many Choices

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# SPEAKING

*Of*

## Hurricane Season – The Time to Prepare is Now

We live in a wonderland of wind and water. These elements give us one of the most desirable climates in the world. But, sometimes the climate gets ugly and dangerous.

Last month was the official start of hurricane season. Because we are so susceptible to tropical storms, it's important that all of us, as residents of Miami-Dade County get prepared.

Many things have changed since Hurricane Andrew. Our ability to predict hurricanes is far ahead of what it was then. We've changed the way we build our homes, and we changed the way we combat flooding.

This is the time when tropical depressions begin to churn off the West Coast of Africa. Should they reach our community, I want you to know that our state-of-the-art Emergency Operations Center is ready for the winds and floods that hurricanes bring.

Over the next weeks and months, information on how to safeguard lives, homes and possessions will be carried on television and radio ... in print media ... on the Internet ... and on videos. All in English, Spanish and Creole.

These messages will encourage you to create your own hurricane preparation plan – and rehearse it with your family.

The plan should include such steps as:

- Protect windows and doors.
- Store plenty of water.
- Fill your car's gas tank, and withdraw cash - gas pumps and ATM's may be down.
- Make sure your car and boat are safe.
- Check all emergency equipment - flashlights, batteries, radios.
- If you live in an evacuation zone, decide where you will go.
- Make provision for pets; they are not allowed in evacuation centers.

I cannot emphasize strongly enough how important it is for special needs residents – who may require assistance evacuating – to register with our Emergency Evacuation Assistance Program now.

But while a tropical storm is whipping through our town, often the accompanying tropical rainfall causes more damage than the wind.

Let me use this opportunity to tell you what we are doing about flooding since Hurricane Irene – and the now infamous No-Name storm – caused such damage in our community.

Thanks to an unprecedented partnership between the County, the State and the Federal government, we have begun the most aggressive flood mitigation program in the history of Miami-Dade County.

The campaign will benefit the entire County, but mostly such hard-hit communities as Sweetwater, Flagami, West Miami and parts of Unincorporated Miami-Dade County – as well as North Miami, hit hard by May's record rainfall.

To solve this, we have installed – and are installing – forward pumps in our primary canals that carry floodwater into the Bay. These pumps are so powerful that they can move about 10 billion gallons of water a day.

In addition, we are dredging 74 secondary canals – and cleaning out 100,000 catch basins and storm drains.

The cost of this flood mitigation program will be nearly \$1 billion, but considering the terrible damage that floods cause in property and lives, it is well worth the investment.

But, let me be clear. We have not solved the problem of flooding – we are only addressing it. No program – however aggressive – can totally prevent flooding. A torrential downpour such as what Broward experienced at the end of May will overcome any preventive measure. But, compared to what happened just a few years ago, we are light years ahead.

We should all take great pride in the progress that we as a County have made in fighting hurricanes and floods.

I ask everyone to start now to safeguard your homes and your families so we are all prepared to deal with the challenges of nature.

Alex Penedas  
Miami-Dade County Mayor





# MESSAGE

*from the County Manager*

As the newly appointed County Manager of Miami-Dade County, I would like to thank Mayor Alex Penelas, County Commission Chairwoman Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler and the entire Board of County Commissioners for the confidence they have expressed toward me. I would also like to thank our County residents and employees alike for making me feel so welcome. The kind words I have received from so many people have been truly overwhelming. To be honest, the decision to return to Miami-Dade County was an easy one. I am honored to be able to rejoin my friends and colleagues in County government. I view the County as my second home and my many friends in County government as my extended family. While we will be facing many immediate challenges, I am confident that through teamwork we can respond to any challenge placed in front of us. As I have said on many occasions, overall, I believe our County government employees and management team are as good as any in the country.



I began my career in Miami-Dade County government in 1982 as a "management trainee" in the County Manager's Office. Throughout the 20 years that I served the County I held several posts, including Budget Director and Assistant County Manager. During my County tenure, I was able to participate in such activities as devising the County's policies for incorporating new cities, helping to guide our strategic planning efforts, and helping to assist the City of Miami out of its 1996 financial crisis, to name just a few memorable assignments. I left the County in the fall of 2002 to pursue an opportunity as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) for Miami-Dade Public Schools. In that post, I was responsible for budgetary, financial, procurement, risk management and all related functions for the fourth largest school district in the nation. While I had expected to continue at the School District for many years as its CFO, I could not refuse the opportunity to return to County government as its County Manager.




Surrounded by Mayor Alex Penelas, Chairperson Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler and the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners, County Manager George Burgess and wife Karen, along with their two sons (far right) speak at a press conference immediately following his unanimous confirmation as Manager by the Board.

Mr. Burgess is now responsible for running the day-to-day operations of one of the largest county governments in the southeast United States with a \$5.5 billion budget, 30,000 employees and 45 departments serving a county population of more than 2.3 million residents.

of talented and qualified employees. Together we will address the immediate issues in front of us, but more importantly, I expect that we will listen to our citizens – our customers, and proactively deliver quality services based on their needs and expectations.

I am passionate in my belief in government that is sensitive and responsive to its customers, government that invests in training and developing its workforce, government that is focused on innovation and efficiency, and government that has a clear vision based on the public's needs and expectations. As we focus on the future, I am excited to work as a team advancing each of these priorities. By maintaining a focus on our customers, fostering a level of professionalism and commitment to public service that is beyond reproach, and welcoming change for the better, I believe we can maintain a healthy organization that is ready to meet the challenges before us.

I am proud to be your County Manager and look forward to working with and serving each of you.

  
George M. Burgess  
County Manager

It was with Miami-Dade County where I grew up professionally. I had the opportunity to spend the early stages of my career working with the most talented of individuals, many of who are still here today. It has been wonderful to "meet again" with such an esteemed team of co-workers. I look forward to enriching the professional relationships that I have enjoyed in the past and that are so important in an organization such as this one. My comfort level and familiarity with the functions and structure of this government, and the members of our County family have certainly helped me hit the ground running.

Being a manager of a large city or county is a great challenge and I recognize the importance of the tasks at hand. We are facing some tough challenges, our budgetary and financial situation being only one of them, but luckily I am privileged to re-enter an organization with a team

## U.S. and Chile Sign Free Trade Agreement

**Historic FTA Agreement is a Prelude to the 34 Trade Ministers Gathering in Miami on November 21, 2003**

*By Hernando Vergara, Communications*

The United States and Chile signed a historic Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that when fully implemented eliminates bilateral tariffs, lowers trade barriers, promotes economic integration and expands opportunities for the peoples of both countries. This signing ceremony served as a prelude to the 34 Trade Ministers gathering in November 2003.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick signed on behalf of the United States, and Chilean Foreign Minister Soledad Alvear signed for Chile, on June 6, 2003, at the Vizcaya Museum and Gardens in Miami. The U.S.-Chile FTA is the first free trade agreement between the United States and a South American country.

"This is an historic agreement that sets a high benchmark for future FTAs," said Zoellick. "This state of the art agreement slashes tariffs and quotas, reduces barriers for services, protects leading-edge intellectual property, keeps pace with new technologies and new ways of doing business, ensures regulatory transparency, and promotes labor and environmental protections."

"American farmers, workers, consumers and businesses will benefit from improved access to the Chilean market, and this FTA will provide momentum to the ongoing negotiations in the Free Trade Area of the Americas and the global trade talks," said Zoellick. "I want to recognize the people of Miami and Florida for their commitment to trade and their hospitality today."

Florida Governor Jeb Bush provided welcoming remarks at the ceremony. Other elected leaders at the event included Miami-Dade Commissioners Jose "Pepe" Diaz and Sally A. Heyman, City of Miami Mayor Manny Diaz and Commissioner Johnny L. Winton.

"Florida stands to gain the most with the signing because of our already strong relationship with Chile," said Governor Bush. "This agreement also encourages progress on negotiations of the Free Trade Area of the Americas."

The U.S.-Chile FTA will increase U.S. market access for goods and services and provide strong protections for U.S. investors in Chile. American workers, consumers, businesses, and farmers will enjoy preferential access to one of the world's fastest growing economies, enabling products and services to flow back and forth from the United States and Chile with no tariffs and under streamlined customs procedures.

Miami known as the "Gateway to the Americas" and a center for regional trade, is hosting the VIII Americas Business Forum in November 17-19, 2003. Additionally, a Free Trade Area of the Americas Ministerial Meeting is also taking place in Miami in November 21-23, 2003. Miami was the site of the 1994 Summit of the Americas, where the Presidents of the 34 democratic countries of the Americas agreed to start the promotion and establishment of the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) by the year 2005.



Chilean Foreign Minister Soledad Alvear (left) and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Zoellick sign the free-trade agreement. Standing behind from the left are: Chilean Lead Negotiator Osvaldo Rosales, Chilean Ambassador to the United States Andres Bianchi, Florida Governor Jeb Bush, U.S. Ambassador to Chile William Brownfield and U.S. Lead Negotiator Regina Vargo.

To read the details of the U.S.-Chile accord, visit:  
<http://www.ustr.gov/new/fta/Chile/final/index.htm>.

[miamidade.gov](http://miamidade.gov) 

# YOUR *Government*

## Liverpool and Valparaiso Sign International Sister Seaports Agreements with Port of Miami

By Trenae Floyd, Seaport

With the goal of exchanging cruise and cargo expertise, officials from Miami-Dade County recently signed an International Sister Seaports Agreements with the ports of Liverpool, United Kingdom and Valparaiso, Chile during the CAMACOL Conference. The primary goal of the Sister Seaports Program is to promote economic growth between the Dante B. Fascell Port of Miami-Dade and international ports around the world.

“Since starting this professional exchange in 1998, we’ve been able to solidify 22 partnerships,” said Port of Miami Seaport Director Charles A. Towsley. “These relationships are important when you consider that cargo destined to the Port of Miami originates from these ports, which ultimately affects our bottom line.”

The International Sister Seaports Agreements were signed by Miami-Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas, County Commissioner Jose “Pepe” Diaz, and Seaport Director Charles A. Towsley. To date, the Port of Miami has signed agreements with the ports of: Buenos Aires, Argentina; Alicante, Spain; Dakar, Senegal; La Coruña, Spain; Las Palmas, Spain; Madeira, Portugal; Marseille, France; Montevideo, Uruguay; Santander, Spain; Tenerife, Spain; Iquique, Chile; Puerto Cortés, Honduras; Ravenna, Italy; Sevilla, Spain; Lagos, Nigeria; Barbados Port Authority, Barbados; Casablanca, Morocco; Valencia, Spain; Genoa, Italy; and Barcelona, Spain.



(L to R) Seaport Director Charles A. Towsley, County Commissioner Jose “Pepe” Diaz, Mayor Alex Penelas and the General Manager of the Port of Valparaiso, Chile, Harald Jaeger, sign the International Sister Seaports Agreement during the CAMACOL Conference in West Miami-Dade.

## More than 100 South Florida Agencies Join Together for One of the First and Largest Disaster Drills in the Region

By Cynthia Martinez, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue

With the nation’s terrorism threat level periodically fluctuating from elevated to high, homeland security seems to be a topic on everyone’s mind. The question of whether this country is prepared to handle a terrorist attack has been asked repeatedly of safety officials throughout the United States. So, are we prepared to handle another terrorist attack? What is Miami-Dade County doing to ensure that County personnel are prepared in the event of a disaster?

Here in South Florida, Fire Rescue and police agencies are constantly preparing and training for the unexpected. In fact, more than 100 agencies were recently put to the test at the Southeast Florida Regional Domestic Task Force Exercise, a full-scale, multi-jurisdictional terrorism exercise. The drill, which was one of the first and largest in South Florida, involved the cooperative participation of numerous agencies from Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Monroe counties.

Held here in Miami-Dade County at Pro Player Stadium, the exercise simulated an attack on a Marlin’s baseball game. It included several scenarios conducted simultaneously at the stadium, while participating hospitals in the four counties conducted supporting drills at their emergency rooms, to practice the reception and treatment of victims. In total, there were approximately 2,700 participants, representing law enforcement, fire rescue, EMS and support organizations, as well as nearly 1,000 volunteers acting as victims.

So, with such a massive drill concluded, the question is asked again – are we prepared?

“I believe this exercise really showed that we could communicate very well,” said Bill Johnson, Assistant Director of Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Management. “The scope of it was massive and we did very well in communicating. I think we’re well prepared and this exercise demonstrated that.”



Student volunteers participate in a mock decontamination during the Southeast Florida Regional Domestic Task Force Exercise, a full-scale, multi-jurisdictional terrorism exercise.

## County Employees Working As Ambassadors to Improve Customer Service

By Loretta Cronk, eGovernment Department

In 2002, Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners, as part of the strategic planning process, adopted a mission statement that reflects the voice of the community:

**Delivering excellent public services that address our community’s needs and enhance our quality of life.**

Clearly, it is the collective desire of the public, county leadership and county employees to provide service that is not just good, but excellent. That is why the County has implemented a Customer Service Initiative that will dramatically enhance the way employees provide assistance to residents.

The Customer Service Initiative has many components, but a key aspect of the program is the development of the Ambassador’s Club. It has often been said that employees are the ambassadors of county government. The Ambassadors Club is a forum for harnessing the power of the County’s workforce as we reach out to our customers through a variety of ways. Ambassadors will be empowered with accurate and positive information about county services, and have the option of participating in a variety of activities, including:

- **Speaker’s Bureau** – Employees who are comfortable with public speaking will be asked to address the public at different community forums. Kits will be provided to include PowerPoint presentations, handouts and other support materials designed to communicate the services we provide as a County.
- **Book Club/Discussion Group** – Each month, different county employees will host discussion groups focused on a particular book or article that offers wisdom on how we can improve ourselves and our organization in the area of customer service. Participating employees will be asked to read the book or passage in advance, and then join the book club meeting to discuss and innovate.

- **Secret Shoppers** – Ambassadors who volunteer may be called upon to ‘shop’ our organization to identify employees who exhibit excellent service and “uncover” frustrating processes that could be streamlined or improved.
- **Eyes and Ears in the Community** – Ambassadors will look for things that need improvement, such as potholes and graffiti. They will take proactive steps to make our community a better place to live, work and play.

Unlike many customer service improvement programs that involve enterprise – wide training classes, the Ambassador’s Club is more of a grassroots approach. Membership is voluntary and the emphasis is on cross-departmental opportunities for continuous learning, self-examination and outreach.

Initiated in early spring, more than 500 employees have signed up to date to be members of the club. A total of nine “kick-off” sessions have been implemented, with more sessions to come. Comments from employees that have attended the sessions are a testament to its early success.



“The Ambassador’s Club kickoff meeting was a ‘WOW’,” remarked Victoria Fox, an employee with the Miami International Airport. “At a meeting last evening in my neighborhood library, I mentioned the program’s mission, and the enthusiasm of those attending yesterday’s kickoff. It has so much potential, and I feel privileged and excited to participate.”



# PEOPLE

*Working for you*

## Know Your County Government

**“It’s fun, and it’s informative.”**  
**“Valuable program.”**  
**“I wish I had learned these things when I joined the County.”**

Miami-Dade County employees have for several months been participating in a new County program to help them better familiarize themselves with the many facets of Miami-Dade County, so they can better serve the residents of this county. Employees who have attended pilot sessions of Know Your County Government (KYCG) have responded favorably to this workshop developed to take county employees on a three and a half hour tour of Miami-Dade County government, its structure, some of its history, a little who’s who, and some lighthearted fun. Through this program, county employees are able to learn about all departments and about services they may not have known were available. In addition, participants are able to review some of the current technology that the County is deploying and they can learn about the opportunities available to them and to all county residents through the county’s web site, [www.miamidade.gov](http://www.miamidade.gov). Even long-time county employees admitted they learned a few things!

The course serves the County’s commitment to becoming more user-friendly, and all employees are expected to attend. The more informed county employees are, the better they can meet residents’ needs with clear and direct information. The Employee Relations Department’s Miami-Dade County University (MDCU) is offering the workshop as part of its regular program schedule and through New Employee Orientation. In addition, MDCU will offer the program on site in departments around the County.

The next sessions are scheduled for:

- July 18, 22, 28
- August 7, 15, 20, 22, 27
- September 5, 12, 18, 26, 30
- The Employee Relations Department will also schedule additional classes to accommodate departmental needs.

## Good Samaritans from Public and Private Sectors Join Together to “Shed” Some Guiding Light on a County Citizen In Need

By Miriam Rossi, Building

Good Samaritans can be found anywhere. Just ask Layladis Rivera. She is a Miami-Dade County resident who received a code violation notice for an unsafe shed. Her husband, William, who is serving in the Army and presently assigned overseas, purchased the shed several years ago.

The shed was deemed unsafe by a Building Inspector because it did not have the appropriate anchors and state approval to be used in a high velocity hurricane zone, as required by law. The violation also included encroachment of a set-back as the shed was placed too close to the property line.

To address the violation, Rivera needed to purchase a new shed with the required state approval seal that demonstrates that the manufacturer’s product was tested and complies with the Florida Building Code. She was faced with a dilemma. The new shed was a major expense for her as a military wife with a newborn baby. To receive a refund for her old shed would have been difficult, too, as it was purchased quite a while ago. She struggled with the dilemma and then decided to call the Building Department for guidance. She reached Building Field Unit Supervisor, Pedro Estopinan.

“He was so helpful in answering all my questions,” said Rivera. In addition, Estopinan visited the Home Depot store where the shed was bought and spoke with Manager Chuck Kettel, to explain the circumstances in order to help her obtain a refund. The results were successful.

“Home Depot has a Project Homefront to help people in our community with military family members serving overseas. She was refunded the money and Home Depot absorbed the loss,” explained Kettel.

He further explained that customers do have a responsibility to check for product control approvals, as signs are posted throughout the store; but he added, “We are also here to help the community.”

Although Rivera’s problem of not being able to afford purchasing a new shed was resolved, there was still the issue of how to remove the old shed. Estopinan once again went the extra mile. He assembled a group of inspectors who volunteered to help this military family in dismantling and removing the old shed.

## County Employee Awarded for Years of Serving and Protecting the Environment

By Luis Espinoza, DERM



DERM employee Jean Evoy receives the Governmental Conservation Award from Tropical Audubon Society.

On a typical early Sunday morning, many of us wander around the house barely awake as we reach for a bowl of cereal and the newspaper. For 62-year-old Jean Evoy, a long-time Miami-Dade County employee and a passionate protector of our unique ecosystem, an early Sunday morning might be slightly different. During her time away from her job in the Department of Environmental Resources Management (DERM), she often takes exciting and exhausting canoe trips through some part of our beautiful waterways.

The morning of May 4 was no exception. She took her solo canoe to the South and paddled a little more than a mile to Chicken Key, a small and hidden treasure not far from the Deering Estate. But that morning there was more to do. It was a unique day for Evoy, as something very special was waiting for her upon her return.

She left her canoe behind to gather with some of her friends and fellow environmentalists at the Chikee Hut in South Miami. There, in a small nature hideaway filled with beautiful plants and trees, she received the “Governmental Conservation Award”. After a special presentation by the Honorable Harvey Ruvin, The Tropical Audubon Society presented Evoy with this award for her lifetime dedication to the protection of our environment.

She was proud and delighted to receive this award for doing what she began 30 years ago when she bought her first canoe: explore, love and protect our local environment. Now, this summer Evoy is retiring after a successful career with Miami-Dade County. And although she is leaving her office in DERM, her passion for the environment will continue to shine as bright as the early morning sun that accompanies her on every canoe trip she takes.



Pedro Estopinan, building field unit supervisor, checks the anchors on Mrs. Rivera’s shed.

### How to Obtain a Permit for a Shed:

- Completion of a Building Permit Application form (can be downloaded from [www.miamidade.gov/bldg](http://www.miamidade.gov/bldg))
- Proof of ownership (i.e., warranty deed, closing statement or tax receipt)
- Two current copies of your property survey that must be less than one year old. The property survey must show the following in ink:
  - Size and placement of shed
  - Setbacks (For more information on setbacks, please contact Zoning Information at 305-375-1806)
  - Location of water and sewer lines (or septic and well)
  - If you have a homeowner’s association, please submit a written approval with your permit application.
- Two sets of full size drawings of the shed (with the State of Florida listing agency, product approval) along with two current letters from the State of Florida’s Department of Community Affairs all obtainable from the store where you purchased your pre-fabricated shed.
- Submit in-person the Building Permit Application and required documents listed above to the Permit Counter located at the Miami-Dade County Herbert S. Saffir Permitting & Inspection Center, 11805 SW 26 Street (Coral Way). The Permit Counter will issue you a process number. These guidelines are for unincorporated Dade County. For additional information, please contact the Miami-Dade County Building Department at 786-315-2100 or visit the website at [www.miamidade.gov/bldg](http://www.miamidade.gov/bldg).

# NEWS

*and Notes*

## Dedication of new Palmetto Roller Hockey Rink at the Palmetto Golf Course

More than 90 young hockey players from the Optimist Club of Suniland came together on April 9th for the dedication of the new Palmetto Roller Hockey Rink at the Palmetto Golf Course, 9300 SW 152 Street, Miami.



Youth from the Optimist Club of Suniland roller hockey team participated in an exhibition game during the event. Located on the north end of the Palmetto Golf Course, the new regulation-size, lighted roller hockey rink is equipped with security fencing and batter boards around its perimeter, a scorekeeper's area, a scoreboard, benches for the players and two sets of covered bleachers.

## Charrettes – A New Method of Planning for the Future

By Maria Crowley, Planning and Zoning

The Department of Planning and Zoning recently formed the Urban Design Studio, which will implement a process called Charrettes, a term derived from the French word for "Little Cart". During the last few years, Charrettes have emerged as a preferred planning technique for community visioning, helping to find answers to fundamental planning questions: Where are we now? Where are we going? Where do we want to be? How do we get there? Recently, Charrettes have been used as a tool by local governments, which needed to brainstorm complex planning problems.

Charrettes can be used to resolve multi-jurisdictional issues because they provide an excellent forum for public input of ideas and result in a unique set of graphic planning and implementation tools, which assist in effective decision-making.



Miami-Dade County residents recently took part in the Cutler Ridge Charrette Program held at the Cutler Ride Mall.

Last year, the Old Cutler Road Charrette took place at the Edward Whigham Elementary School. At that public forum, area residents expressed concern regarding the traffic congestion and growth in the Old Cutler area. The Charrette Report from that meeting will address the traffic concerns as well as the historical character of the Old Cutler Road corridor, and make living in that community that much better.

The Charrette Reports will be presented to the area Community Councils and are part of the Comprehensive Development Master Plan (CDMP) recommended for planning a pedestrian friendly, transit-supportive urban corridor development. For fiscal year 2003, four Charrettes are planned in the Commission Districts 3, 8 and 9 areas of Miami-Dade County. Previous charrettes have taken place in Goulds, Ojus, North Central, Naranja and Perrine.

## Miami-Dade County Supports the Troops

On May 23, in the lobby of the Stephen P. Clark Center, Miami-Dade County volunteers and county officials worked together to package and ship more than 100 care packages to county employees and family members currently serving in our Armed Forces overseas.

The U.S. Postal Service collected the care packages and employees were invited to participate in the final packaging efforts and to sign a giant "Come Home Soon" card prepared by the County.

At the present time, more than 93 county employees and several hundred immediate family members of employees are serving overseas.

Through a county-wide employee-driven effort during May's National Salute to Our Troops celebration, county employees generously volunteered their time to sell T-shirts, raffle prizes and donate money for their co-workers overseas. In fact, employees raised more than \$8,000.



## Divorce Court On Wheels

By Victoria Arias, 11th Judicial Circuit of Florida

Administrative Judge Joel Brown of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida's Family Division has taken the courthouse to the streets! On February 28, 2003 Miami-Dade County's Government on the Go turned into a mobile divorce court where Judge Brown presided over uncontested divorces while parked outside the Joseph Caleb Center.



Miami-Dade County residents stand before Judge Joel Brown of the 11th Judicial Circuit Court as part of the new "Divorce on Wheels" program offered through the Government on the Go Bus.

The qualifying parties who participated in this first-ever "Divorce on Wheels" have been clients of the Administrative Office of the Court's Self Help Project. As a result of this partnership between the Government on the Go bus and the courts, the Self Help Project has been instrumental in providing the community with important information about divorce and other limited family matters.

The Self Help Program assists litigants who represent themselves in navigating through the Family Court System by providing general information, procedural advice and referrals. Staff from the Unit review pleadings offer litigants the option to purchase legal forms they may need in order to proceed with their case.

For further information about Divorce on Wheels, please contact 305-349-7376.



# Miami-Dade County Celebrates Transportation Milestone with Opening of Palmetto Metrorail Station

By Aurelia Vasquez, Office of Public Transportation Management



South Florida officials and dignitaries come together for the historic opening of the Palmetto Metrorail station.

The Office of Public Transportation Management (OPTM) gathered local, state and federal officials at the new Palmetto Metrorail Station to celebrate its grand opening on Friday, May 30, 2003. The Palmetto Metrorail Station is the 22nd of the rapid transit system and is the first to open in 14 years.

Highlights of the grand opening ceremony included a special presentation to retired Congressman William Lehman, who helped secure construction of this project by advocating the allocation of \$17 million in surplus funds from the Metromover Project. After the ceremony, public officials and dignitaries participated in an inaugural ride with Mayor Penelas at the helm.

The completion of the Palmetto Metrorail Station and 1.4 mile rail extension is a transportation milestone for the County. Located at 7701 NW 79 Avenue in the Town of Medley, the station is the area's only transport hub for commuters traveling eastbound, originating in Northwest Miami-Dade and Southwest Broward County. It provides an alternative to driving that offers easy, affordable and rapid travel into Northwest Miami, Downtown/Brickell, Coconut Grove, South Miami and Kendall. The OPTM predicts that much like the Dadeland Station, the Palmetto Metrorail Station will build upon the vitality of the surrounding area, as it alleviates traffic tensions in the area and becomes an attractive proposition for future developments and economic growth.

The Palmetto Metrorail Station offers commuters easy access from State Road 826; a park and ride lot for 710 cars, including 20 wheelchair spaces and three stroller spaces; and three Metrobus connections - Route 282, Route 245 and Route 242. Furthermore, travel time from the Palmetto Station to the downtown Government Station and the Dadeland Station is estimated to be 29 and 47 minutes, respectively.

The Palmetto Metrorail Station is characterized by a grand roof structure that serves as a focal point from the Palmetto Expressway and by an easy access layout for buses and private vehicles alike. Commuters are greeted by a landscaped plaza leading to an open-air double-height station concourse; its notable architectural features include striking columns and glass block clearstories. Complementing the station's natural environment, the Miami-Dade Art in Public Places Trust commissioned renowned Miami artist Robert Huff to create an elevating and culturally rich public environment. The result is EAST/WEST, a remarkable work of art consisting of a hand-glazed ceramic tile support-structured roof system at the departure and arrival platform of the station.

# AT YOUR Service

## On the Roadways of Change

The People's Transportation Plan (PTP) is in high gear after six successful months of performance. Many improvements have been made to Miami-Dade County's bus and rail service. Included in these improvements are reduced wait times, route extensions, service expansion, and to fulfill these improvements, more than 230 new bus operators have been hired and 100 full size buses and 70 mini-buses have been ordered.

Just last month, the County implemented 24-hour Metrorail service, 24-hour Bus Service on 21 routes, and 24-hour paratransit service.

The PTP is steadily advancing transit conditions in this community, in part due to the fact that it is enabling Miami-Dade County to compete for more state and federal funds to improve its mass transit services. To date, the Office of Public Transportation Management (OPTM) has received more than \$17 million in state and federal funds for transit programs, such as the Bird Road MAX, the WAGES Welfare to Work program, and for the enhancement of security measures throughout Miami-Dade Transit.

A critical part of the PTP is the creation of a Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust (CITT). The 15-member Trust will oversee the spending and work with OPTM to plan, construct and manage the PTP's 25-year, \$17 billion transportation plan. The CITT roster is at twelve members, with three pending appointments to the Trust. The members are:

- **Clarence Days.** He has worked and volunteered for several Miami-Dade Community service organizations for more than 5 years. He is a graduate of Miami Job Corp and William H. Turner Technical Arts High School.
- **Thamara Labrousse.** She is the director of helpline services at Switchboard of Miami. She has more than 10 years of experience in community grassroots projects, community organizing and special event planning.
- **Michael Abrams.** He is a consultant with Katz, Kutter, Alderman & Bryant and currently serves on the OM Board of Trustees. He served as Florida State Legislator from 1982 to 1994.
- **Luis C. Morse.** He is a retired member of the Florida House of Representatives (1984 – 1998). He is an Industrial Engineer by profession and during his years as a legislator served on the House Transportation Committee.
- **Maria Elena Coto.** She is an Office Manager for the Miami-Dade County Public Schools. An active member of the community, she is currently President of the Schenley Park Homeowners Association.
- **Marc A. Buoniconti.** He is Ambassador and Co-Founder of the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis and President of the Buoniconti Fund to Cure Paralysis. As a citizen with a disability, he offers an invaluable perspective to the Trust.
- **John F. Cosgrove.** He served on the Florida House of Representatives from 1981 to 2000. For more than 30 years he has actively served in civic and professional organizations.
- **Henry Lee Givens.** He is a Capital Inventory Specialist with Miami-Dade Water and Sewer. He has been an active member of the community for more than 30 years. He is currently president of the Coconut Grove Chamber of Commerce and of the Grovites United to Serve Organization.
- **Rafael Garcia-Toledo** – Pending ratification – He has more than 17 years of experience in the transportation industry. He is a founding member of the Miami-Dade Expressway Authority and is currently president of Oriole International, Inc.
- **Elsa M. Lopez.** She is Director of Government Relations for the United Teachers of Dade. She has been actively involved in the community for more than 15 years, and has served in numerous civic and professional organizations.
- **Lt. Colonel Antonio Colmenares.** He is the Logistics Operations Planner for the U.S. Marine Corps, U.S. Southern Command. His Military career spans 25 years with more than 20 years experience in the field of transportation.
- **Rev. Theodore Wilde.** He is a retired Pastor of Prince of Peace Moravian Church and currently is a member of People Acting for Community Together. He has served as an economist and administrator in community and regional development for more than 25 years.

The CITT held its first meeting on May 7 and selected Michael Abrams as Interim Chair and John Cosgrove as Interim Vice-Chair. Four committees have been established: Budget and Finance, Project Review, Compliance and Oversight, External Affairs and By-Laws. Moving forward, the CITT is laying the necessary groundwork to face the challenges, as well as the rewards of implementing the PTP.

The following improvements are scheduled over the next six months:

- Implementation of three new Bus Routes: Flagami Connection - July 2003, Airport West Connection - October 2003, Liberty City Circulator - October 2003
- Service Enhancements to 61 bus routes
- Begin construction of Busway extension to Florida City
- Hire additional bus and rail operators

By a margin of more than two to one, Miami-Dade voters overwhelmingly approved the People's Transportation Plan on November 5, 2002, paving the way for a dedicated funding source exclusively for the improvement of transportation. The PTP is a traffic relief plan in which the County commits to adding more buses and routes, improving service, expanding rapid transit and creating thousands of transit and construction related jobs over the next 25 years.

For additional information about the People's Transportation Plan and the Citizens' Independent Transportation Trust visit [www.trafficrelief.com](http://www.trafficrelief.com) or call OPTM External Affairs Division at 305-375-5194.

# DIRECT

*from the District*

## District 1

### Residents in the City of Miami Gardens Vote to Accept Charter

On Tuesday, May 13, voters in the new north Miami-Dade city of Miami Gardens traveled to area polling places to vote on the municipal charter proposed by the North Dade Charter Commission. Of the 3,558 votes cast, a total of 2,455 voted to adopt the charter.

The City of Miami Gardens, home to more than 100,000 residents, is now the third largest municipality in Miami-Dade County.

“This is a good step for this area and proof that when residents get involved results follow,” said Commissioner Betty T. Ferguson, District 1.

The city is bordered by NW 215 Street to the north, NE Second Avenue to the east, NW 57 Avenue to the west and NW 151 Street to the South.

Recently, the city voted in the first mayor and two council members. Run-off elections for the four council seats are scheduled for July 22.



Commissioners Jimmy Morales (far left) and Betty T. Ferguson (far right) with Shirley Gibson, Chairman of N. Dade Municipal Advisory Committee

Commissioner Ferguson (center) with area residents in favor of the new City of Miami Gardens



## District 2

### Commissioner Rolle Hosts Celebration Block Party for Tornado Victims in Liberty City Area

On May 10, Commissioner Dorrin D. Rolle hosted a block party for Liberty City residents affected by the tornado that struck the area on March 27 and left more than \$12 million in estimated damage and destruction. The block party was held to celebrate President Bush’s approval of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding for residents of the area and the recovery efforts that have been made so far.

“The residents of this area have been through so much heartache, so I think it’s time for some celebration now that we’re on the road to recovery,” said Commissioner Rolle.

Hundreds of area residents enjoyed the free food, music and family entertainment provided by Commissioner Rolle.



Commissioner Rolle and Team Metro employees hand out food at the block party.



## District 3

### Chairperson Carey-Shuler Cleared by Ethics Committee Board



Chairperson Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler

The Miami-Dade Ethics Committee members have stated that Miami-Dade County Commission Chairperson Dr. Barbara Carey-Shuler did nothing wrong in advocating and securing County money to support community-oriented programs that benefit the children of our community.

Chairperson Carey-Shuler was instrumental in establishing the three programs cited by the Ethics Committee – Music Fest Miami, the Youth Crime Task Force and No More Stray Bullets, all non-profit organizations - while she was an employee of Miami-Dade County Public Schools (DCPS). These groups were supported by the County, other municipalities, the School Board and private contributors.

Music Fest Miami, spearheaded by Chairperson Carey-Shuler, City of Miami Mayor Manny Diaz and other community leaders, is a weekend celebration of music bringing together people from around the world. The festival opened this year with an educational initiative targeting students in Miami-Dade County Public Schools with cultural workshops, lectures and presentations.

The Youth Crime Task Force was created to develop an overall countywide plan for the prevention of youth crime. It provides funding for new prevention and intervention programs for at-risk youth that have helped stem the incidence of youth crime and youth gun violence.

The No More Stray Bullets program, championed by Chairperson Carey-Shuler, was implemented to stop the wanton shooting of firearms during holiday celebrations that often resulted in serious injuries and deaths caused by stray bullets. According to a policy analysis by the Miami-Dade Police Department, the program, now in its fifth year, has been an effective outreach to protect innocent bystanders and has diminished the number of incidents and fatalities.

Chairperson Carey-Shuler continues to move the Commission into a new era of cooperation with the Mayor designed to make government more effective, efficient, accountable and resourceful.

The results can be seen through her commitment to improve county government as she has streamlined the way policies and laws are made by instituting committees and holding public hearings at the committee level.

Since voters approved changes to the Commission structure in September 2002, the Office of the Chair has gained more powers over policy and legislation in a county of approximately two million residents, 30 municipalities, an unincorporated area larger than the state of Delaware and an annual budget of \$ 5.6 billion.

The Office the Chair now also presides over the Commission when it meets as a zoning board to make land use and zoning decisions, and over the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), which determines what federally funded transportation projects will be carried out.



District 4

Commissioner Sally Heyman Joins Volunteers for Biscayne Bay Cleanup Project; Helps Flamingo “Land” in Family Court

Commissioner Sally Heyman, District 4, joined community volunteers on Saturday, April 12, to clean up wayward trash at Haulover Beach as part of Miami-Dade County’s Baynanza Biscayne Bay Cleanup.

“This is one of my favorite events,” said Commissioner Heyman. “You see so many people from different walks of life pitching in together to make a difference.”

Trash that ends up in waterways, especially Biscayne Bay, can have a detrimental impact on wildlife. There have been cases of sea turtles and whales accidentally eating plastic bags, mistaking them for jellyfish. Sea birds and manatees can get snared in fishing lines, loose twine and many other types of garbage. The Biscayne Bay cleanup is an effort to make a real difference for the marine environment.

Haulover was one of 30 sites throughout the county where thousands of community volunteers participated by removing tons of trash off the shores and islands of Biscayne Bay.

In April, Commissioner Heyman also joined administrative family court Judge Joel Brown and international artist Marcie Ziv in welcoming “Barkett” the flamingo to her new roosting place on the 11th floor of Courthouse Centre, Miami-Dade’s Family Court building. Barkett is an eight-foot-tall, full-wing-spanned, multi-colored flamingo sculpture that was sponsored by Commissioner Heyman and created and designed by Ziv to be shared with the public.

Ziv, a Miami resident and owner of Gallery Ziv in Coral Gables, graciously donated her \$8,000 fee to Project Newborn, a non-profit organization that maintains and supports the neonatal intensive care unit at University of Miami Jackson Memorial Medical Center.

With the help of Chief Judge Joe Farina, Barkett will be residing on the 11th floor of Family Court through December 2003, and then will venture off to other Miami-Dade justice facilities for public viewing.



Commissioner Heyman, Judge Joel Brown and artist Marcie Ziv welcome Barkett to his new home.

District 6

Commissioner Sosa Hosts Candlelight Vigil for U.S. Troops; Travels to Tallahassee to Fight for Medically Needy Program

On April 1, County Commissioner Rebeca Sosa hosted a candlelight vigil and prayer service entitled “Lights of Hope” at AD Barnes Park in South Miami for American troops fighting in Iraq. The service was open to the public and drew a large crowd of attendees, many of whom were family and friends of American troops. The event featured Angel Lopez, former lead singer of platinum-record-selling musical group Son by Four, singing the National Anthem; prayers by Father Sergio Carillo of St. John Catholic Church in Hialeah, Police Benevolence Association (PBA) Chaplain Peter Newman, the Reverend Martin Añorga and Father Jose Luis Menendez of Corpus Christi; “God Bless America” sung by 15-year-old, locally and nationally recognized music artist T-Marie; and a presentation by the Miami-Dade County Color Guard. Miami-Dade County Parks and Recreation Department Director Vivian Donnell-Rodriguez served as the mistress of ceremony. Grupo Amor y Libertad, a support group comprised of parents of American troops overseas, was also in attendance and local Boy Scouts Troop 457 and local Girl Scouts Troop 1039 helped hand out American flags to the crowd.

“The event was a wonderful time for the community to gather together and pray for the safe return home of our troops,” said Commissioner Sosa.

Commissioner Sosa also traveled to Tallahassee on April 29 to meet with members of the Florida Legislature regarding various issues facing Miami-Dade County residents, one being the Medically Needy Program that was in danger of being discontinued. She was part of a successful effort to keep the program intact. The Medically Needy program provides critical healthcare coverage to people who have high medical bills but whose income surpasses Medicaid’s modest \$660-a-month

District 5

Around Town With Commissioner Bruno A. Barreiro



Commissioner Barreiro, Arturo Sandoval, Carolyn Panzer and Emilio Estefan at the launching of TIPS en Español.

Commissioner Bruno A. Barreiro recently sponsored a resolution directing the County Manager to establish a mentoring program allowing county employees to use one hour per week to volunteer at school or community-related activities.

“Creating a mentoring program in county government will increase the available pool of mentors who can assist the young and elderly in our community,” said Commissioner Barreiro.

Administrative leave, not to exceed five hours per calendar month, will be granted to employees for them to volunteer in community service programs that meet any child, elder or human need.

He also sponsored a resolution in January directing the County Manager to develop a signage program that warns motorists to exercise caution in areas with significant elderly populations.

“It is our hope that these signs will alert motorists to be more cautious when driving,” said Commissioner Barreiro. “Several countries in Europe effectively use them in areas where facilities catering to the elderly are situated.”

These signs, serving a similar purpose to that of school crossing signs, will help keep motorists aware of their surroundings where facilities such as adult day care centers, nursing homes and assisted living facilities are located.

Commissioner Barreiro is also currently working on a resolution that will convert the County’s policy regarding communications to a paperless (electronic) system. This policy would conserve resources, reduce County expenses, make operations more efficient and simultaneously take advantage of recent technological advancements.

Lastly on May 13, 2003, Commissioner Barreiro showed his support for alcohol abuse prevention at the launching of TIPS en Español, a national program to recognize, detect and prevent alcoholism among Hispanic consumers. Although this program has been offered since 1982 by Health Communications, this is the first major effort to reach Spanish speakers.

ceiling. If Governor Jeb Bush and the Legislature had not come up with a solution before May 1, the program would have required recipients to live on only \$450 a month to keep their benefits.

“I refused to abandon our senior citizens and see this much needed program fall by the wayside,” said Commissioner Sosa.



Commissioner Sosa (far right) helps light candles for family members of U.S. troops stationed in Iraq.

# DIRECT

*from the District*

## District 7

### Commissioner Jimmy Morales Initiates Sports Commission; Unveils Photo Exhibit Honoring Imprisoned Cuban Dissidents

On April 8, 2003, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) voted to create the Miami-Dade Sports Commission, as proposed in an ordinance sponsored by County Commissioner Jimmy Morales. The Sports Commission will be responsible for promoting, attracting and soliciting adult and youth amateur sports events from throughout the county, the United States and the world to the greatest extent feasible, and will strive to generate and further community support to achieve this purpose. The Commission also has the authority to form a 501(c)(3) corporation for the purpose of raising private funds to assist needy adult and youth amateur athletic organizations.

"Attracting adult and youth amateur sporting events to Miami-Dade County will provide the County with a consistent stream of new tourists," said Commissioner Morales. "Thousands of event participants, their families and organizers will travel here from around the world for years to come."

There are currently 13 sports commissions throughout the state of Florida working full-time to generate economic impact for their communities and the state by attracting a wide variety of amateur sports events. In 2001, for example, the Ft. Lauderdale Sports Development Department was successful in attracting 156 events that resulted in more than 300,000 hotel room night stays and an economic impact in excess of \$200 million for Broward County. "We hope to see similar results in Miami-Dade County," said Commissioner Morales.



Commissioner Morales poses in front of the 20 de Mayo photo exhibit with members of The Domino Network who organized the exhibit.

The BCC will appoint two of its members to serve as non-voting, ex-officio members of the Commission.

Commissioner Morales also unveiled a photo exhibit in the lobby of the Stephen P. Clark Building on Cuban Independence Day, May 20, 2003 – or 20 de Mayo for Cuban Americans – in honor of the more than 60 Cuban dissidents recently imprisoned on the island. The photos were provided by the dissidents' family members, some of whom were in attendance at the presentation.

The Commission will be governed by a board of directors consisting of nine voting members representing the following organizations: the County Manager's Office; the Miami-Dade Parks Department; the Miami-Dade League of Cities; the Amateur Athletic Association; the Miami-Dade School Board; the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau (GMCVB); the Greater Miami and the Beaches Hotel Association; the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce; and the Orange Bowl Committee.

## District 8

### Commissioner Katy Sorenson Congratulates Student Water Conservation Contest Winners; Celebrates National Library Week at Coral Reef Library

County Commission Vice Chairperson Katy Sorenson and the Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department honored five public school students at the May 8 meeting of the Board of County Commissioners for winning a countywide water conservation poster contest. Three of the students – Erik Mena of Palmetto Elementary, Dianna Costello of Whispering Pines Elementary, and Giselle Perez of Arvida Middle School – are from Commissioner Sorenson's south Miami-Dade district. One of the winners, Giselle Perez, won second place statewide in the middle school category for her entry.



Commission Vice Chairperson Sorenson (center) with students from Village Pines Elementary School at Coral Reef Library during National Library Week.

conservation poster contest, held each year in Florida public schools to celebrate National Drinking Water Week.

The poster contest was created by the Florida Section of the American Water Works Association, a water utility trade organization, to teach and remind students of the importance of water conservation. All winning posters for Miami-Dade were displayed in the lobby of the Stephen P. Clark Government Center in downtown Miami during National Drinking Water Week, May 4-10, 2003. They can also be seen online at the County's website at <http://www.miamidade.gov/wasd/>.

Miami-Dade winners received an official Certificate of Appreciation from the Board of County Commissioners, a framed copy of their entries, a trophy and a \$50 U.S. Savings Bond.

Commissioner Katy Sorenson also celebrated National Library Week, April 6-12, with a visit to Coral Reef Library, where she read to 4th, 5th and 6th graders from Village Pines Elementary.

"I encourage everyone to stop by their neighborhood library to see all of the wonderful services they offer, many of them free of charge, and to take advantage of this fantastic resource," said Commissioner Sorenson.

"It's wonderful to see children from our community recognized for understanding how important it is to protect and conserve our drinking water. The creativity they've shown in their poster designs is inspiring," said Commissioner Sorenson.

The Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department is the local sponsor of the statewide "Drop Savers" water

## District 9

### Commissioner Dennis C. Moss Calls for Study of Home Rescue Loan Program; Helps Break Ground at Eureka Villas Park

In an effort to help needy senior citizens avoid losing their homes when they become unable to pay their property taxes, the Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution sponsored by Commissioner Dennis Moss on May 6 that directs the County Manager to study the feasibility of creating a home rescue loan pilot program.

The resolution directs the County Manager to identify any existing loan programs or revenue sources that may be used, determine the economic impact such a program would have on the County, and establish the eligibility requirements for the participants.

"Many senior citizens in Miami-Dade County face the difficult task of continuing to pay their real estate taxes after they turn the age of 65, their income decreases and/or a tax certificate is sold on their property," said Commissioner Moss. "There may be loan programs out there, possibly with the federal government, that the County could participate in, and this resolution directs the County Manager to investigate those possibilities."

On May 12, Commissioner Moss, Miami-Dade Parks Director Vivian Donnell-Rodriguez, Herbert Ammons Middle School Principal Irwin Adler and Ammons Middle School students helped celebrate the groundbreaking for a new field house and parking lot at Eureka Villas Park, which is adjacent to the school at 17990 SW 142 Avenue in South Miami-Dade.

Construction of the 2,270-square-foot field center and 73-space parking lot, expected to be completed by May 2004, was funded with \$702,000 from the county's Quality Neighborhoods Improvement Program (QNIP) and impact fees.

"Our County parks should be places where our children can take part in athletics and avoid getting into trouble, and I'm excited that the County was able to significantly improve Eureka Villas Park for the children of this area," said Commissioner Moss.



County Commissioner Dennis Moss (center), Miami-Dade Parks Director Vivian Donnell-Rodriguez (right of center), Ammons Middle School Principal Irwin Adler and Ammons Middle School students ceremoniously break ground on the new field house and parking lot at Eureka Villas Park.



# District 10

## Commissioner Souto Resumes Normal Activities



Commissioner Javier Souto

Commissioner Souto recently resumed his normal activities after being operated on at Jackson Memorial Hospital to correct a blockage in his coronary arteries that occurred early April 11. He narrowly escaped a heart attack, and other possible circulatory complications. Said Commissioner Souto:

“I thank God that the doctors at Kendall Regional Center found out right away what the problem was, and they initiated the proper treatment. Then, later on that day, I was transferred to JMH and surgery was performed with my heart beating (off-pump), very successfully on Monday, April 14. Three days later, April 17, I was back home. Right now I feel well again, and have returned to my normal duties. My office remained open and working normally all the time, helping the constituents.

I even attended some functions after the second week following the operation. I want to thank, from the bottom of my heart, each person who prayed, called, wrote, or sent flowers, plants and fruit baskets. I deeply appreciate your thoughts and wishes.”

Commissioner Souto wants to use this opportunity to remind everyone to please check on their health regularly and to visit their doctor at least once or twice a year so they can be more aware of any problem that may be developing.

“These periodic visits to the family doctor should detect any health problem that may exist and avoid further complications,” he added.

# District 11

## Commissioner Joe A. Martinez Helps Prepare Small Businesses for Hurricane Season; Honors Local Student

At the start of every hurricane season in South Florida, residents get tips from a variety of resources including grocery stores, the local media and Miami-Dade County on how to protect themselves and their personal property. Assistance exclusively for small business owners was scarce until recently, when Commissioner Joe A. Martinez partnered with Florida Atlantic University’s Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to help better prepare them for the sometimes devastating effects of Florida’s hurricane season.

Last month, Commissioner Martinez and the SBDC organized a free workshop featuring a panel of experts from organizations including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) who spoke to a packed audience of small business owners about how to secure their business places for a major storm. The workshop was also attended by representatives from the county’s departments of Emergency Management and the Office of Community and Economic Development.

“When we think about hurricane season, most of us only think about the need for homeowners to prepare,” said Commissioner Martinez. “Many times, the small business owner is forgotten. The FAU SBDC has stepped to the plate to help make sure that small business owners are also prepared for the worst.”

Commissioner Martinez helped the SBDC kick off its first Hurricane Awareness Week campaign here in South Florida with televised public service announcements and community events and flyers distributed at various strategic locations throughout the county. To contact the Small Business Center, call 786-388-5350.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Martinez continued his work in honoring local elementary school students for their achievements when he awarded a student from Ethel Koger

Elementary School with the “Joe A. Martinez Turnaround Award,” which identifies a select group of students whose behavior or academics one year ago was considered to be unsatisfactory.

“For some children, growing up can be very difficult, and this can cause them to not do well in school,” said Commissioner Martinez. “Therefore, this award is for those children who have done a complete turnaround in their behavior or academics. It also serves as a rewards perk for kids who really have the potential to excel but just need reinforcement.”

Commissioner Martinez presented the winner with a new bicycle for his progress. The Commissioner gives the award annually to elementary school students in South Miami-Dade and since 2001 has recognized more than 17 students.



Commissioner Martinez congratulates Noreen Madruga and her son Jonathan, who was awarded a bike for winning the “Joe A. Martinez Turnaround Award.”

# District 12

## County Commissioner Jose “Pepe” Diaz Dedicates Street Sign to Slain U.S. Soldier and Honors Local Police Officers



Pictured at the special ceremony for slain U.S. Marine Bruce Carter were, from left: Virginia Gardens Council President Spencer Deno IV, Councilman John Nelson, Mayor Paul Bithorn, Commissioner Diaz, Councilman Steven Petterson, Georgie Carter Krell, Councilwoman Elizabeth Taylor-Martinez and Councilman Julio Fojon.

During a special ceremony on Thursday, May 15, 2003, Miami-Dade County Commissioner José “Pepe” Diaz dedicated a street sign at NW 66 Avenue and 4th Street in honor of U.S. Marine Corps soldier Pfc. Bruce W. Carter, who was killed during operation Idaho Canyon on August 7, 1969. Posthumously, Carter was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor by former President Richard Nixon for conspicuous gallantry and bravery.

Best remembered for his constant smile and commitment to greatness, Carter was a resident of Miami-Dade County at the time of his death. Commissioner Diaz, also a former U.S. Marine, presented the honor to Carter’s family during a Village of Virginia Gardens Council meeting. He also presented Certificates of Appreciation to four Village of Virginia Gardens police officers who assisted the County during its “Salute To Our Troops” event held in April. Commissioner Diaz received an honorable discharge from the U.S. Marines on December 26, 1964.

# YOU Should Know...

## Norwegian Dawn Sails Into History as First Cruise Ship to Make Miami a Port-of-Call

By Trenae Floyd, Seaport

The Norwegian Dawn recently made history when it called on the Dante B. Fascell Port of Miami-Dade. The Dawn, which houses 2,240 passengers, has become the first cruise ship in the Port of Miami’s history to make the “Cruise Capital of the World” a port-of-call on a consistent basis. The Dawn, which measures 965 feet in length, arrived at the Port of Miami for its first official stop on Wednesday, May 21, 2003 and it has been continuing to bring passengers to enjoy our community every Wednesday.

“This is a unique opportunity for the Port of Miami and local tourism-related businesses,” said Seaport Director Charles A. Towsley. “Each week, visitors can get a sample of Miami’s attractions and local beaches.”

Passengers aboard the Norwegian Dawn can experience several shore excursions including a tour of the Everglades, golfing, a visit to Parrot Jungle, deep-sea fishing, the Art Deco and Lincoln Road Experience, and shopping sprees.



The Norwegian Dawn recently sailing into the Port of Miami.

“While this is the first time a ship has made the Port of Miami a port-of-call on a consistent basis, we welcome other cruise lines to introduce similar itineraries,” said Towsley. “We have ample space to accommodate cruise vessels mid-week.”

The Norwegian Dawn’s New York to Miami itinerary will be continuing until October 19.

## MIA and TSA Join Forces to Screen U.S. Mail for Explosives

By Tere Estorino, Aviation

Miami International Airport (MIA) and the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) have come together in a pilot program that uses explosive detection canines to screen mail. This program is an effort between the TSA, several airlines nationwide, and the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to help place mail weighing 16 ounces or more back on cargo holds of commercial airplanes. This common practice was suspended after 9/11 due to the potential threat to airline security.



A canine team recently conducting a mail inspection at Miami International Airport.

The program is specifically using canines to screen mail because the trained animals combine excellent mobility with reliable detection rates. Beyond initial and weekly training, each team, consisting of a uniform officer and a canine, must also go through an annual certification to demonstrate they continue to meet TSA-certification standards.

MIA is one of only 12 airports throughout the nation participating in the pilot program, which began in November 2002. Screened mail will travel from MIA to Honolulu, Hawaii, and San Juan, Puerto Rico via American Airlines. The goal is to expand the project to all major airports by the end of the year. The endeavor has so far been a success.

“We appreciate the cooperation we are getting with Miami-Dade Aviation Department as one of our partners in this pilot program. The synergy between the airlines, the Miami-Dade Police Department, the U.S. Postal Inspectors and the aviation authority demonstrates our ability to continue to enhance security at our nation's airports,” said Lauren Stover, TSA spokeswoman for the Southeastern United States.

Aviation Department Director Angela Gittens said, “Safety and security are our primary concerns at MIA. As such, we welcome the TSA's efforts to ensure that mail is safely transported on commercial aircrafts. An added advantage of this project is that it will bring much-needed revenue to the airlines, and that will greatly benefit the industry as a whole.”

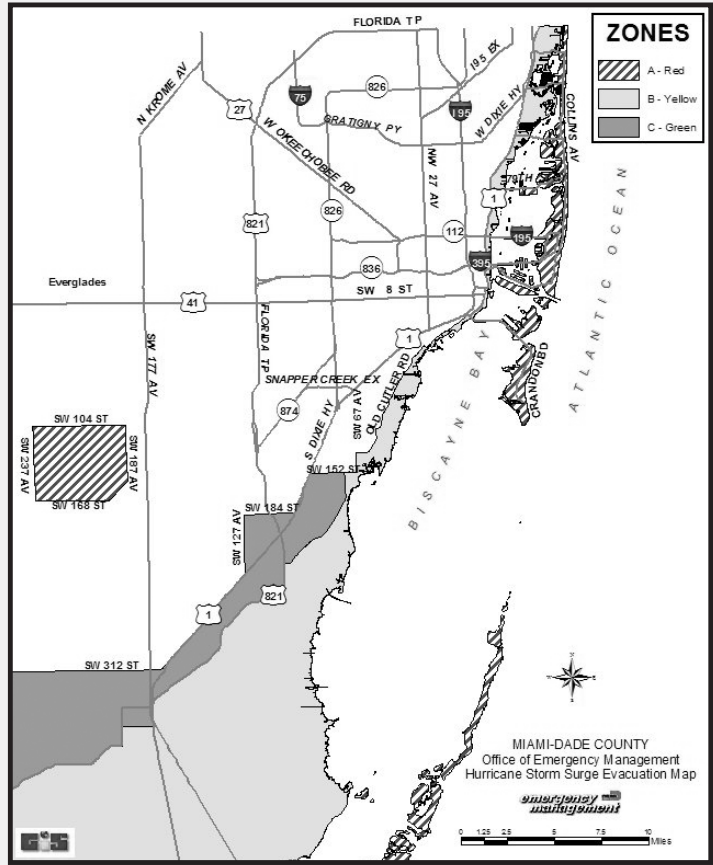
## New Evacuation Zones - What You Need to Know to Prepare This Hurricane Season

With hurricane season already underway, officially running from June 1 through November 30, Miami-Dade County has some new information that affects every county resident. The Miami-Dade Office of Emergency Management (OEM) has published the new Hurricane Evacuation Zones, which includes several major changes. Most visible is the reduction in size of the areas incorporated into an evacuation zone. Also, the zones are no longer designated by a hurricane's category, which range from one (1) to five (5) in severity, but are now designated by zones labeled A, B, and C.

Another change of note is that zip codes no longer appear on the maps. This is due to Miami-Dade's new passive approach to evacuations. This means that unlike years past when residents' zip codes precipitated their automatic evacuation dependant on the category of the hurricane, now in an effort to keep all county residents as safe as possible, residents need to evacuate only if ordered to do so. This will keep many residents off of the dangerous roadways during a storm. The County is working to minimize evacuations, making them as effective as possible.

Using the National Hurricane Center's Sea, Lake and Overland Surges from Hurricanes (SLOSH) computerized model, the County is able to better predict a hurricane's wind and height of storm surge. This, along with other advancements in technology and a two-year evacuation restudy led the County to this more realistic and passive evacuation procedure. The evacuation restudy was the combined efforts of many agencies including the Miami-Dade OEM, DERM, and Public Works; the Army Corp of Engineers, FIU, and the US Coast Guard, Geological Survey, and Weather Service just to name a few.

It is important to note that just because residents live outside the evacuation zones, that does not mean they may not have to evacuate. Residents need to consider how wind-resistant their homes are or how susceptible their areas are to flooding. This is the time, at the start of hurricane season, to make your disaster plan. Make the necessary preparations now, while you have the time.



### Evacuation Zones

**Zone A (Red Zone)** – Miami Beach, Virginia Key, Key Biscayne and all islands lying within Biscayne Bay including the municipalities of Golden Beach, Sunny Isles Beach, Bal Harbour, Bay Harbor Islands, Indian Creek Village, Surfside, North Bay Village, City of Miami Beach and the island portions of the City of Miami. (Note: That area west of the L-31N levee known as the 8 ½ Square Mile Area is ordered to evacuate because of its inaccessibility to rescue vehicles following a major storm.)

**Zone B (Yellow Zone)** – All areas of mainland Miami-Dade County lying (north to south) east of Biscayne Boulevard, Brickell Avenue, S. Miami Avenue, South Bayshore Drive, Main Highway, Ingraham Highway, Old Cutler Road, the Florida Turnpike south to U.S. 1 to State Road 9336 [SW 344 Street (Palm Drive), SW 192 Avenue (Tower Road) and Ingram Highway] south to Everglades National Park. The only exception to this pattern is a small area east of Old Cutler Road, west of SW 67 Avenue and north of SW 152 Street that is not in the evacuation zone.

**Zone C (Green Zone)** – The area of Miami-Dade County west of Zone B and a line defined by SW 152 Street (Coral Reef Drive) at Old Cutler Road going west to U.S. 1, then south to SW 184 Street (Eureka Drive), then west to SW 127 Avenue (Burr Road), then south to U.S. 1 to SW 312 Street (Campbell Drive or Homestead's NW 8 Street), then west to Everglades National Park.



# IN YOUR *Community*

## July is National ADA Month

July is ADA Month, celebrating the enactment of the Americans With Disabilities Act in 1990. Miami-Dade County has accomplished great progress making its programs, services, and activities accessible to people with disabilities, and providing additional services specifically for people with disabilities. In order to get the word out about these important programs and services, the Miami-Dade County Commission on Disability Issues (CODI) will be sponsoring a conference and resource fair titled “Making the Connection – When I need help, what do I do and where do I go?” The event will be held on Wednesday, July 23 at the Steven P. Clark Center.

The Resource Fair will be held in the lobby of the Stephen P. Clark Center, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The Fair will feature various types of Miami-Dade County programs and community-based services available to people with disabilities. The Conference will be held from 1:45 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the 18th floor of the Clark Center, and will feature answers to commonly asked questions, the agencies or departments that are available to answer those questions, the resources available to counter discrimination and promote advocacy, and updated information on County employment, housing, and transportation programs.

Commission on Disability Issues is an official advisory board to the Miami Dade County Commissioners. The primary role of CODI is to advise the County Commission on County government issues that affect people with disabilities.

Contact the Office of ADA Coordination at 305-375-3566 to learn more about the Resource Fair and Conference, to find out how to register, or to request a sign language interpreter or material in accessible format.

## Leisure Access Services (LAS) and Miami Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) Team Up to Serve a Successful Tennis Clinic During the NASDQ-100

By Nelson Canales, Parks and Recreation

Leisure Access Services (LAS) of Miami Dade Parks and Recreation department organized this year’s tennis clinic at Crandon Park on March 25. The event has grown throughout the years with the combined help of Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) and the International Tennis Federation (ITF). The ITF organizes several international wheelchair team events, including two major international events that include the Davis Cup by NEC for men and the FED Cup for Women.

This year’s tennis clinic provided 50 students from MDCPS the opportunity to meet the top 10 international ITF wheelchair tennis Athletes and USTA coaches. The students were able to receive pointers from the “pros”. Students were also able to watch an exciting doubles exhibition game between Ester Vergeer (Ranked 1) and Robin Ammerban (Ranked 2) vs. Jayant Mistry (Ranked 9) and Maaïke Smit (Ranked 2). Famous faces were in attendance at the event, including Nick Bolleteri, former coach of Andre Agassi and Anna Kournikova. He inspired students with a motivational speech about the importance and the impact sports can have on their lives.



Esther Vergeer, an international wheelchair tennis player from the Netherlands, gives expert advice to a student.

The ITF’s Development Manager Mark Bullock and Manager Ellen leLange played a significant role in organizing this event. Other major influential parties in the event include USTA coaches Cary Grawe, Marc Abrams, Ruben LaMothe (LAS Tennis Coach), volunteers from Florida International University’s OT program, and MDCPS Education Specialist Tim Andexler.

## Miami-Dade County Women Honored During Women’s History Month Celebration at Vizcaya

15<sup>th</sup> year for “In the Company of Women” Awards

By Laura Phillips, Parks and Recreation

More than 300 area residents and dignitaries showed up to honor 17 outstanding Miami-Dade County women leaders at the 15th annual “In the Company of Women” awards on March 19th at Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, 3251 South Miami Ave., Miami.

This Women’s History Month celebration recognized these pioneers for blazing new paths for women, including State Representative Dorothy Bendross-Mindigall, District 109; Josephine Gordy Whang, author of the book Chinese in Southeast Florida 1900-1992; Eileen Nexer Brown, the first Executive Director of the Women’s Fund of Miami-Dade County; Miami-Dade Corrections and Rehabilitation Department Director Lois Spears; Jane A. Torres, founding president of the Florida Breast Cancer Coalition Inc.; and Adele T. Weaver, founding president of the Florida Women’s Political Caucus.

Honorees included Jacqui Colyer, consultant and adjunct professor at Barry University; Assistant City Manager of Miami Beach Christina M. Cuervo; Legal Services of Greater Miami Executive Director Marcia K. Cypen; Miami-Dade Aviation Department Director Angela Gittens; Judge Sandy Karlan, Family Division, 11th Judicial Circuit Court; Marbay Real Estate, Inc. President/ CEO Liliam M. Lopez; Roymi Membiela, Principal, Roymi Membiela & Associates; Eliza D. Perry, former City of Homestead councilwoman; and Aude Sicard, Community Relations Representative, Jackson Memorial Hospital’s Cuban/ Haitian Refugee Program.

Posthumous honors went to Phyllis Miller, former chairperson for the Miami-Dade County School Board and Millicent Spicer Wilson, a retired Miami-Dade County educator.



(L to R) Miami-Dade County Parks’ Director Vivian Donnell Rodriguez; Miami-Dade County Commissioner Katy Sorenson, District 8; John Softness, aide to Miami-Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas; Miami-Dade County Commissioner Rebeca Sosa, District 6; Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman, District 4; and Miami-Dade County Commissioner Jimmy Morales, District 7 at the 15th annual In the Company of Women awards, March 19th at Vizcaya.

This event was hosted by Miami-Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas and the Board of County Commissioners, the Miami-Dade County Commission for Women and the Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department. Community sponsors for this event included Bacardi U.S.A., the Girl Scout Council of Tropical Florida Flag Corps, Democratic POWER and the South Florida Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Inc. The evening event included a cocktail reception, entertainment by the New Dimensions jazz orchestra and a prize drawing for tickets to Metrozoo, the Deering Estate at Cutler and performances at the Miami-Dade County Auditorium. Local media personality Jill Beach officiated as the mistress of ceremonies.

# PROGRAMS

*for You*

## Miami-Dade Housing Agency Staff Participates in Habitat for Humanity Blitz Build

By Javier Morejon, Miami-Dade Housing Agency



(L to R): Dwayne Little and Henry Caballero of MDHA's New Markets division installing a window frame on a Habitat for Humanity house.

house sponsors, and future homeowners. MDHA staff labored on two of the four lots donated to Habitat by the County through MDHA's Infill Housing Initiative, which is designed to improve the physical appearance of neighborhoods by developing vacant lots in urban areas. Families are also receiving second mortgage assistance from MDHA.

"It was very rewarding to see many of our employees volunteering for such a worthy effort," said Rodriguez.

"I believe that Habitat for Humanity is among those few organizations that one can participate in, be an instrument of the process, and be able to meet the people who are directly blessed by this labor of love," said Joseph Socarras one of many MDHA staff proud of their accomplishment.

In addition, residents from the HOPE VI project were also onsite helping during the building blitz in a joint effort that allowed them to gain valuable construction experience as part of a partnership between MDHA, Habitat for Humanity, and D.A. Dorsey Adult Educational Center. Three days a week, residents from the Scott Homes and Carver Homes public housing developments enrolled in a building construction technician course at Dorsey, participated in a hands-on training at the Habitat site. Eric Goding, the class instructor, explained that the class is unique because the students work with different aspects of the construction trades.

"The students work on electrical, plumbing, and drywall construction, supervised by actual contractors." The students study more than 1,400 hours of course and field work to get a contractor's certificate from the State of Florida that allows them to take the contractor's exam and receive their state license. "This is the first class to undertake the program," Goding said.

Helping to build their own homes is a dream come true for many of the families who will soon move in. These include residents from two of MDHA's public housing developments as well as four Section 8 participants.

"We are so excited to be a part of this organization because we would not be able to buy a house any other way," said Rigoberto Umanzor, who is purchasing a home with his wife and daughter. "Everything is so expensive and the interest rate would be too costly. We are so thankful to all the volunteers who are helping to make our dream come true." The Umanzor's currently live in the Rainbow Village public housing development, which is within walking distance of their new Habitat home.

Habitat for Humanity is a Christian ministry that builds and sells affordable homes on a non-profit basis to low-income families. The organization has more than 2,000 affiliates worldwide. Habitat of Greater Miami has built more than 450 homes in Miami-Dade County and is the most successful infill affordable housing developer with 74 homes in the City of Miami having been built and sold, including these ten properties.

Miami-Dade Housing Agency (MDHA) staff, recently traded in their suits and abandoned their offices to tie on carpenters' aprons and don their heads with hard hats to help build homes in the community for the Fifth Annual Habitat for Humanity's Blitz Build in Overtown, which started on April 28, and built 10 houses in nine days. MDHA Director Rene Rodriguez was among the 30 MDHA volunteers who worked on the homes, including Juan Carlos Del Valle of the Mayor's office,

## New HOPE VI Homebuyers



Armando Perez Aleman from Citywide Association hands jubilant new homebuyer, Carol Young (previously of Scott/Carver Homes), her keys to her HOPE VI new home. The lender for Young is Citibank and Bankers Title is the closing agent.

Citywide Assoc. Armando Perez Aleman gives a very excited Palmela Moss the keys to her HOPE VI brand new home. Moss is an ex-Scott Carver Homes resident. Bank Atlantic is Palmela's lender and Surealty is the closing agent.



## Miami-Dade's Web Portal Pinpoints Sexual Predators/Offenders in "My Neighborhood"

Approximately 1,700 registered sexual predators and offenders reside in Miami-Dade County. As unsettling as that may be, there is a new armor of defense for parents, teachers and concerned citizens in "My Neighborhood", an online service offered by Miami-Dade County.

In accordance with Megan's Law, which requires states to make the names and addresses of registered sex offenders available to the public, Miami-Dade County's web portal is helping county citizens get in the know. With just an address, a street intersection or landmark, web portal users can see the names and faces of every convicted sexual offender/predator in Miami-Dade County, view maps of their current residences, obtain detailed reports of their history and link to related websites. The site can be accessed at [http://gisims2.co.miamidade.fl.us/MyNeighborhood/Help\\_Offenders\\_Predators.asp](http://gisims2.co.miamidade.fl.us/MyNeighborhood/Help_Offenders_Predators.asp) or by browsing the miamidade.gov web portal for "My Neighborhood".

This site shows the location of the current residence for each convicted sexual offender and designated sexual predator in Miami-Dade County. The State of Florida requires notification to the local community and information, including a photograph of each registered offender. While the State makes every effort to insure the accuracy of this information, since individual circumstances may change rapidly, you are cautioned that the information may need to be further updated.

There's also a kid-friendly site at [http://kids.miamidade.gov/stranger\\_danger.htm](http://kids.miamidade.gov/stranger_danger.htm) that provides kids with important tips and safety rules for dealing with strangers.

Megan's Law, signed by President Clinton in 1996, was recently upheld in a review by the United States Supreme Court. The Court ruled that photos of convicted sex offenders may be posted on the Internet, beating back a challenge from convicted sex offenders who argued they no longer pose a danger to the public and should not have their pictures and addresses published on the Internet.

### How "My Neighborhood" Works

My Neighborhood allows users to search a variety of databases linked to the County's geographic mapping system. It uses a common look and feel to provide geographically-based mapping information, data and reports on crime incidents, code violations, capital improvements, land use and property sales, in addition to registered sexual offenders and predators.





# SERVING *Your Family*

## Miami-Dade Parks Summer Camps Offer Children Outstanding Recreation and Cultural Activities

By Elisa Smith, Parks and Recreation

There's a tradition at Miami-Dade Parks. It's a tradition of providing children with outstanding summer programming.

From learning the game of tennis to performing in musicals, for decades children have been enjoying a diversified recreational and cultural program that includes sports, the arts, environmental education and enriching field trips.

With activities offered at more than 75 parks throughout the county, approximately 10,000 children and their families last year made Miami-Dade Parks their choice for summer camp. One of the leading parks systems in the country, Miami-Dade County Parks offers families a nurturing, stimulating environment with outstanding supervision that is affordable.



Music students spend the summer taking lessons at the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center operated by Miami-Dade Parks.



Children can become skilled sailors through Jr. Sailing Camp at Amelia Earhart Park.

This summer, many of the General Camp's activities will center on the arts. Children will be able to unleash their creativity through dance, art, crafts, drama and music. Campers will have the opportunity to receive lessons in the arts and showcase their talents in a finale at the Joseph Caleb Auditorium. Students will be able to participate in a photo contest, allowing them to test their photography skills. The general program also combines sports, games, swimming, exciting field trips, special events and much more.

Children can also participate in Specialized Camps focusing on areas such as golf, cheerleading, nature, sailing and the arts for advanced students.

Running June 16 - August 22, Miami-Dade Parks' summer camps are offered weekdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with various parks providing early drop-off and late pick-up. For more information, call 305.755.7800 or visit [www.miamidade.gov/parks](http://www.miamidade.gov/parks)

## Students Getting a Jump Start on Their Futures With Miami-Dade Transit

By Karla Damian, Miami-Dade Transit

Jasmine Kears, a fourth-grade Miami-Dade County student, was amazed when she discovered the amount of cooperation and teamwork needed to keep Miami-Dade Transit (MDT) running on track.

Kears was one of more than 130 fourth-grade students from Norland Elementary School who recently visited MDT's Northeast Facility as part of the "Kids and the Power of Work" (KAPOW) program.

The MDT field trip allowed the students to see the actions and behaviors that take place in a work environment.

During their visit, the students saw the Transit Information Call Center in action, and learned about emails, faxes, maps and the high-tech equipment in a Metrobus. They also had the opportunity to see how the computer systems are used to run the bus-dispatch control room and much more.

Classroom presentations by KAPOW volunteers Esna George of Bus Operations, Melissa Scott of Bus Maintenance, along with Kevin Petit-Phar and Jackie Bailey of Customer and Information Services, introduced the students to such work-related concepts as teamwork and the importance of positive work habits and attitudes. "This is the workforce of the future," Bailey said. "Many of the skills these students

## Library Summer Reading Program

Marivi Prado, Miami-Dade Public Library System

In an effort to encourage children and their families to discover the wonderful resources available to them at their public libraries during the summer vacation, the Miami-Dade Public Library System is inviting youth, ages 18 and under, to participate in the annual Summer Reading Program. This year's theme is "Be A Bookasaurus. Discover Lost Worlds."

Students who read for a minimum of four hours each week will be eligible to participate in weekly drawings that will lead winners to exciting reading adventures. The program is designed so that all levels of readers can enjoy and participate. Even tiny tots can participate when a parent/guardian reads to them for a minimum of four hours a week. Drawings will be held each week at all Miami-Dade Public Libraries. Participants will be eligible to win free passes to South Florida attractions. There will be two winners each week from each library. Winners will receive two passes to one of the following South Florida attractions: Boomers, Clover Leaf Bowling, IMAX Theatre, Museum of Contemporary Arts, Historical Museum of Southern Florida, Gold Coast Railroad Museum, Venetian Pool, Miami Art Museum, Metrozoo, Museum of Discovery & Science, and the Miami Children's Museum.

Participation in the Summer Reading Program is simple. Parents can bring their children to the library and after sign-up in the Children's Department, children will receive a Reading Log. When the child has read for four hours, he/she should log the reading time on the Reading Log and bring it back to the library for the weekly drawing.

All eligible readers will receive an Entry Form to win one of the three Grand Prizes: a birthday bowling party bash for 10 at Cloverleaf Bowling Lanes; a Miami Seaquarium "Swim with the Dolphins" Gift Certificate; or a two-day admission pass for four to Busch Gardens, plus hotel accommodations. In addition to qualifying for the weekly drawings and the Grand Prizes, children will be treated to performances including puppet shows, animal shows, crafts, or magic. There will also be great giveaways so that everyone walks away a winner!



The Honorable Mayor Alex Penelas along with his wife Lilliam, speaking to children at the Summer Reading kick-off, June 3, at the Miami Lakes/Palm Springs Branch.

are learning now, from math to just getting along with others, will help them in their future careers."

Kears agreed, "It's good for our education because you get to learn about the variety of jobs you can do."

The KAPOW program is sponsored by Miami-Dade Public Schools' Department of School-To-Career Initiatives, that seeks to increase workplace awareness through partnerships between businesses and elementary schools.



Raymond Cummings Sr. (front), a dispatcher at MDT's Northeast Facility, and Administrative Officer Esna George (back) of Bus Operations, show Norland Elementary School students the computers used at the bus-dispatch control room.

# CITIZEN

## *Fightings*

### New Field Center at Bird Lakes Park

On Tuesday, May 27, 2003, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Joe Martinez, District 11, Miami-Dade Park and Recreation Department Director Vivian Donnell Rodriguez, Miami-Dade Parks Assistant Director of Operations Jack Kardys, and students from Ethel Beckham Elementary School helped break ground for a new field center at Bird Lakes Park, 4765 SW 144 Ave, Miami. The new field center will include a storage area, a meeting room, a park office, a snack bar, restrooms and an open porch. Impact fees and Quality Neighborhood Improvement Program (QNIP) funds totaling \$735,000 have been allocated for this project. The Center is slated for completion by May 2004. This 8.47-acre neighborhood park currently has a baseball field, a basketball court, a shelter and a playground.



### New Lighted Walkway for Residents to Enjoy

Concerned Citizens of West Dade came together recently for the dedication of the new lighted walkway at International Gardens Park, SW 18 Street and SW



123 Court, Miami. The walkway lights project entailed resurfacing the park's 200-foot pedestrian walkway and adding 21 new light poles along this route. These park improvements were funded by the Quality Neighborhood Improvement Program (QNIP) and land sale proceeds at a cost of \$115,000. Other amenities at the 5.38-acre park include a baseball field, a playground, benches and perimeter fencing. Miami-Dade Parks plans to expand the existing walkway and lights another 900 feet next year. (L to R) President Gabriel Matos and group members Mariana Vincente, Fulgencio Castro, Cuqui Castro, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Joe A. Martinez, District 11, and Sarita Matos.



### Freshwater Aquarium Dedication

New Exhibit for Sea-Lovers: Bill Sadowski Park Manager Barbara Gouldener, Miami-Dade County Commissioner Katy Sorenson, seven-year-old Katie Flinn (daughter of Palmetto Bay Mayor Eugene Flinn), Miami-Dade Parks' Director Vivian Donnell Rodriguez on Saturday, May 17 at the dedication of the new Freshwater Aquariums Exhibit at Bill Sadowski Park and Nature Center, 17555 SW 79 Avenue, Miami. The new 822-gallon acrylic aquarium is surrounded by smaller aquariums that contain native freshwater fish, plants, invertebrate animals, turtles and even a baby alligator. Free mini Eco Adventure Tours were also offered during this event, which included a turtle presentation and guided nature walks and canoe trips led by Miami-Dade Parks' naturalists.

## CUT

### *it Out*

### Emergencies 911

Police Non-Emergency .....305-4 POLICE  
Fire Non-Emergency.....786-331-5000

Answer Center  
(Open M-F, 8am-8pm) .....305-468-5900  
Animal Services Unit.....305-884-1101  
Bus and Rail Information.....305-770-3131  
Center for Employment Hotline ...305-375-5725  
Community Councils .....305-375-2842  
Consumer Protection Hotline.....305-375-3677  
Consumer Service Switchboard ...305-375-1250  
County Manager.....305-375-1032  
Jackson Health System .....305-585-1111  
Libraries .....305-375-BOOK  
Park & Recreation.....305-755-7800  
Parking Violations .....305-275-1133  
Mosquito Control.....305-592-1186  
Traffic Signals Out.....305-592-3580

Team Metro Neighborhood Service Centers  
Downtown.....305-375-4845  
North Central .....305-626-7976  
Caleb Center .....305-636-2333  
Northwest .....305-557-2171  
Kendall .....305-270-4979  
South Dade.....305-234-1510  
Melrose .....305-638-7231  
University .....305-222-2133  
Northeast.....305-947-9858  
West.....305-480-1700

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Board of County Commissioners  
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District 6  
Jimmy L. Morales  
District 7

Katy Sorenson  
District 8  
Dennis C. Moss  
District 9  
Senator Javier D. Souto  
District 10  
Joe A. Martinez  
District 11  
José "Pepe" Diaz  
District 12  
Natacha Seijas  
District 13

Harvey Ruvin, Clerk of Courts  
George M. Burgess, County Manager  
Robert A. Ginsburg, County Attorney



Miami-Dade County provides equal access and equal opportunity in employment and services and does not discriminate on the basis of disability.

# CountyCitizen

We're more than county employees, we're your neighbors

